

WARD NEWS

Ward 4 - Councilmember Stark

www.stpaul.gov/ward4

651.266.8640



Saint Paul City Council's Ward 4 E-Newsletter Volume 6, August 2008

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Ward 4 Photo Contest

For those of you who have been to the Ward 4 office in City Hall, you know it could use some more color and reminders of "life in Ward 4." So Samantha has dreamt up a photo contest in which the top photos would be framed and hung in our office. I also think it would be great to have the "exhibit" travel around to Ward 4 coffee shops prior to settling on the office walls. We will have two sets of contest winners, so that we can rotate the photos.

Please consider submitting photographs and passing this along to your friends and neighbors to spread the word! The deadline is 4:00pm, October 1, 2008.

Two age categories:

- 18 & Under
- 19 & Over

Topic categories:

- Ward 4 places/scenery
- Ward 4 people
- Doing business in Ward 4
- Getting Around Ward 4
- Ward 4 community events
- Ward 4 wildlife & nature

If taking digital photography:

- Send as JPG format
- Send in highest file size possible
- Do not compress the file
- If you are sending multiple files that are too large for email, please send a CD to the address below.

If using traditional film:

- Use as low a film speed as possible for better resolution when enlarged.

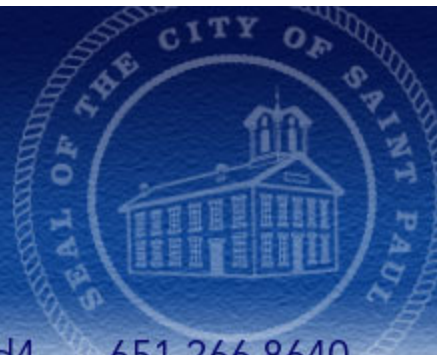
Photo release. For a photograph capturing images of people, you need to have each person's permission to use his/her image. Please use the attached form and return with your entry.

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Please direct questions and send your entries to Samantha Henningson (Samantha.henningson@ci.stpaul.mn.us), along with information about age and topic categories. If using actual film pictures, please send the pictures and negatives (we will return negatives) to 15 West Kellogg Blvd, Suite 310-D, City Hall, St Paul, MN 55102-1615.

The Light Rail Project

As planning for the light rail project moves forward, the work is becoming much more in the details for everyone involved. City and County officials and staff, project engineers, community members, and the Metropolitan Council outreach staff are working block-by-block, inch by inch to insure that we have the best possible project.

For businesses along University Avenue, much remaining uncertainty relates to parking, as you've surely noticed in media coverage. With hundreds of businesses along the Avenue, it will take time to develop solutions because each block has different types of businesses and different circumstances. The City is working with its partners to develop various solutions along the Avenue, including a model for shared-parking that would help areas with inefficient surface parking be better utilized. Last month, I raised the idea of reducing University Avenue to one thru-lane in each direction in order to bring back on-street parking. It appears that this option would have a negative impact on the project's federal Cost Effectiveness Index. Another option that's being explored is to have the right lane in each direction be used for parking except during peak traffic times. I am committed to working with neighbors, businesses, and project partners to get questions answered and to ensure that the needs of the businesses on the Avenue are being addressed.

Sober House Ordinance

On July 9, 2008, the City Council unanimously passed the sober house ordinance I described in my last missive. I'm appreciative of the many hours of work contributed by City staff, neighbors, and members of the sober house community who came forward to influence the legislative process. I believe the final ordinance does a great job of balancing the needs and rights of sober house residents and the City's interest in maintaining the character of its neighborhoods.

RNC Update

In a few short weeks, the City of Saint Paul will be in reflection mode, considering the impact that the 2008 Republican National Convention had on our City, and the impression Saint Paulites made on an international audience. I have been in communication with a number of residents and constituents about concerns surrounding the RNC, particularly regarding free speech. I have also been in many meetings with staff and police to be briefed on plans for the RNC, giving me the opportunity to share questions many of you have asked; I have largely been satisfied by the answers and the philosophy of the Police Department about this event. I will continue to ask the important questions down to the last minute. Lastly, the Ward 4 office will be open for business, just like the rest of the City, on business days during the RNC.

Ward 4 Development

Wellington Management is moving forward with plans to build a mixed-use commercial/office building at 2700 University Avenue (at Emerald). The building will include a first floor grocery store with office space on the floors above. The developers will be seeking LEED Certification for the building, and have committed to developing the Avenue's first travel demand management (TDM) plan for a new development. A TDM plan outlines the ways in which the development will work to minimize the number of single-occupant vehicle trips to and from the premises, with tools such as well-located bicycle parking, preferred parking for carpools, a possible car-sharing hub, and employer subsidized transit pass programs.

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The Housing and Redevelopment Authority has approved a Tax Increment Financing Plan for the development that will make it economically viable. In return, Wellington Management has agreed that a portion (25%) of any proceeds from parking revenue for park-and-ride to either events or for commuters will be paid to the City. The developers do not have specific plans to offer park-and-ride on site but foresee it as a possibility.

Rock-Tenn Update

The August 4th Rock-Tenn Community Advisory Panel (RCAP) meeting included the St. Paul Port Authority's recommendations of which options to continue pursuing for powering Rock-Tenn. Options 1 and 2, which the Port firmly believes to be viable, would involve the development of a sizable new anaerobic digester outside of Saint Paul that would produce biogas. The biogas would be plugged into the natural gas pipeline into the Twin Cities and Rock-Tenn would then use natural gas as its primary fuel source. The digester would produce an amount of gas equivalent to Rock-Tenn's demand for natural gas, and Rock-Tenn would get a "discount" off the normal price of natural gas through carbon credits and possibly a transmission/transportation cost discount from Xcel Energy. Rock-Tenn would commit to staying in Saint Paul for 10 more years.

This proposal seems like a win-win for keeping 475 good-paying jobs in Saint Paul (most of them union) and significantly reducing Rock-Tenn's emissions. The proposal also includes a new system for capturing the waste heat from Rock-Tenn to be used by other commercial/industrial users in the area.

Kudos to the RCAP, the Port Authority, and everyone involved for developing such a forward-thinking proposal. Much work remains to be done to iron out the details, but everyone is feeling cautiously very optimistic.

Best,

Russ

Be in the know:

- Hamline Midway Library Survey Results Meeting
August 19, 6:30pm - 8:00pm
Hamline Midway Library Auditorium (1558 W. Minnehaha Ave)
Thank you to the 330 people who completed the Hamline Midway Library Survey! All are welcome to join Library Director Melanie Huggins as she presents the survey results and next steps for the library.
- Rock-Tenn Advisory Committee Meeting – Discussion of Port Authority Recommendations
Monday, August 18, 7:00pm
Wilder Center Auditorium, 451 Lexington Pkwy North

As always, please pass on the Ward 4 e-news to neighbors and friends. Subscribe by emailing Samantha.Henningson@ci.stpaul.mn.us